DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 406 312 SO 027 663

AUTHOR	Nolin, Mary Jo; And Others
TITLE	Adult Civic Involvement in the United States. 1996 National Household Education Survey. E.D. TABS.
INSTITUTION	Westat, Inc., Rockville, MD.
SPONS AGENCY	National Center for Education Statistics (ED), Washington, DC.
REPORT NO	NCES-97-906
PUB DATE	97
NOTE	30p.
AVAILABLE FROM	National Library of Education, 555 New Jersey Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20208-5574, 800-424-1616 (outside Washington Area), 202-219-1692 (local), or FAX request to 202-219-1693.
PUB TYPE	Statistical Data (110)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Citizen Participation; Citizen Role; *Citizenship Education; Citizenship Responsibility; Civics; Community Action; *Community Involvement; National Surveys; *Political Attitudes; Politics; Public Affairs Education; Public Opinion; *Reading Habits; Social Action; Social Attitudes; Social Responsibility; Tables (Data)
IDENTIFIERS	National Household Education Survey

ABSTRACT

This report presents data on the civic involvement of U.S. adults, including sources of information, community and political participation, and attitudes toward government and democratic principles. The data are from the 1996 National Household Education Survey, Adult Civic Involvement component. A brief summary of the data is included in the Highlights section. An overview of the survey methodology is profiled in Technical Notes. The majority of the information is expressed in statistical tables correlating participant characteristics (age, sex, education, household income) with responses to the phone survey questions. Regarding sources of information, adults were asked about their reading habits and activities. The survey revealed that the percentage of adults who read the national news in a newspaper or news magazine almost daily increased with each age category from 18 to 55 and older. Two five-item sets of questions about the government were included in the survey. An adult's highest level of education was related to their score on this knowledge index. The poll also collected information on community participation, defined as membership in an organization, attending religious services on a regular basis, or participating in community service. Voting and five other types of political participation were measured, as well as skills related to civic participation. In addition, adults were asked their opinion about statements related to political efficacy and democratic values. The survey also asked for opinions on four potential actions that might improve public education. (MJP)

SO

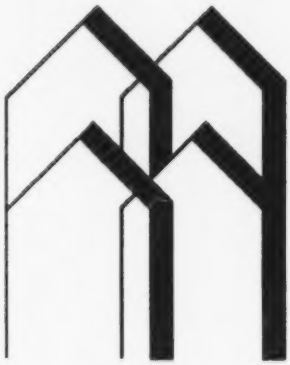
ED 406 312

NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

E.D. TABS March 1997

1996 National Household Education Survey

Adult Civic Involvement in the United States



National Household Education Survey

SO 027663

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement NCES 97-906

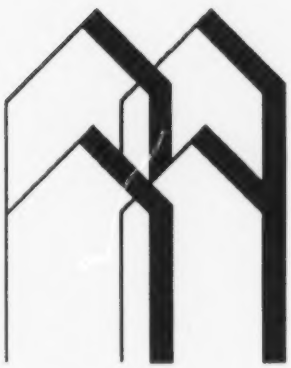
BEST COPY AVAILABLE

NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

E.D. TABS March 1997

1996 National Household Education Survey

Adult Civic Involvement in the United States



National Household Education Survey

Mary Jo Nolin
Westat, Inc.

Chris Chapman
Education Statistics Services Institute

Kathryn Chandler, Project Officer
National Center for Education Statistics

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement NCES 97-906

U.S. Department of Education
Richard W. Riley
Secretary

Office of Educational Research and Improvement
Marshall S. Smith
Acting Assistant Secretary

National Center for Education Statistics
Pascal D. Forgione, Jr.
Commissioner

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) is the primary federal entity for collecting, analyzing, and reporting data related to education in the United States and other nations. It fulfills a congressional mandate to collect, collate, analyze, and report full and complete statistics on the condition of education in the United States; conduct and publish reports and specialized analyses of the meaning and significance of such statistics; assist state and local education agencies in improving their statistical systems; and review and report on education activities in foreign countries.

NCES activities are designed to address high priority education data needs; provide consistent, reliable, complete, and accurate indicators of education status and trends; and report timely, useful, and high quality data to the U.S. Department of Education, the Congress, the states, other education policymakers, practitioners, data users, and the general public.

We strive to make our products available in a variety of formats and in language that is appropriate to a variety of audiences. You, as our customer, are the best judge of our success in communicating information effectively. If you have any comments or suggestions about this or any other NCES product or report, we would like to hear from you. Please direct your comments to:

National Center for Education Statistics
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
U.S. Department of Education
555 New Jersey Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20208–5574

March 1997

The NCES World Wide Web Home Page address is
http://www.ed.gov/NCES/

Suggested Citation

U.S. Department of Education. National Center for Education Statistics. *Adult Civic Involvement in the United States,* NCES 97-906, by Mary Jo Nolin and Chris Chapman. Project Officer: Kathryn Chandler. Washington, DC: 1997.

Contact
Kathryn Chandler, Project Officer
(202) 219–1767
(e-mail) nhes@ed.gov
http://www.ed.gov/NCES/NHES

For free single copies, call the National Library of Education at 1–800–424–1616 (outside Washington area) or (202) 219–1692 (local), or send a FAX request to (202) 219–1693.

Introduction

This report presents data on the civic involvement of adults in the United States, including sources of information, community and political participation, and attitudes toward government and democratic principles. The data are from the 1996 National Household Education Survey (NHES:96), Adult Civic Involvement component.

Highlights

Sources of Information

Adults were asked about regular reading activity, that is, reading a newspaper at least once a week, reading magazines on a regular basis, or reading any books during the last months. They also reported on their sources of national news.

- Highest level of education is associated with reading activity. Adults who did not complete a high school program are less likely to read a newspaper at least once a week (71 percent) than those with a high school diploma (85 percent), some college (89 percent), or a bachelor's degree or higher (91 percent, table 1). The same pattern exists for reading at least one magazine on a regular basis.

- The percentage of adults who reported having read any books in the past 6 months increased significantly with each level of education. Percentages ranged from 42 percent of adults with less than a high school diploma to 83 percent of adults with a bachelor's degree or above (table 1).

- U.S. adults are more likely to receive news about national issues on a daily basis from television or radio than from a newspaper or news magazine (table 2). Thirty-one percent said they read the national news in a newspaper or news magazine almost every day, while 75 percent said they watched the national news on television or listened to the national news on radio almost every day.

- The percentage of adults who read the national news in a newspaper or news magazine almost daily increased with each age category, from those 18 to 24, to people 25 to 39, to those 40 to 54, to adults 55 or older. The Nation's younger and middle-aged adults, those 18 to 24, 25 to 39, and 40 to 54, also were less likely to report that they watched the national news on television or listened on the radio than were older Americans (table 2).

- A lower percentage of adults who were parents with children 18 years old or younger living in the household (25 percent) reported reading about the national news in a newspaper or news magazine on a daily basis compared with those adults who had no children in that age range living with them (34 percent, table 2).

Knowledge of Government

Two five-item sets of questions about government were included in the survey. Each respondent was randomly selected to receive one set of questions.

- On a five-item index of knowledge about government, about half of American adults (55 percent) answered three or more questions correctly (table 3).

- A greater percentage of men (65 percent) than women (46 percent) and a greater percentage of people who are white and not Hispanic (61 percent) than people of other racial/ethnic groups (36 percent) scored three or more on the knowledge index (table 3).

- An adult's highest level of education was also related to his or her score on the knowledge index. Fifteen percent of adults with less than a high school education, 43 percent of those with a high school diploma or equivalent, 67 percent of adults with some college, and 84 percent of those with a bachelor's degree or above answered at least three questions correctly (table 3).

Community Participation

Indicators of community participation included membership in an organization, attending religious services on a regular basis, and participating in community service.

- Fifty-nine percent of adults belong to a community or professional organization, 50 percent attend religious services once a month or more, and 39 percent participate in ongoing community service (table 4).

- Younger adults, those 18 to 39 years old, are less likely to belong to an organization or attend religious services regularly than are their elders, but they are just as likely to do community service on a regular basis (table 4).

- More highly educated adults are more likely to participate in community service than those less educated. Approximately half of those with a bachelor's degree or above versus about 40 percent of adults with some college reported that they do community service work (table 4), and both of these groups are more likely than adults with a high school diploma or less to participate in that type of activity.

- Adults who report that they read about or watch or listen to the national news nearly every day are more likely than adults who neither read about nor watch or listen to the national news on a daily basis to participate in more ways in their communities by belonging to an organization, attending religious services once a month or more, or doing community service (table 6).

Political Participation and Attitudes

Voting and five other types of political participation were measured, as well as skills related to civic participation. In addition, adults were asked their opinion about statements related to political efficacy and democratic values.

- Persons who are white and not Hispanic are more likely than others to have said that they voted in the past 5 years. Eighty percent of white, non-Hispanics reported voting in contrast to 57 percent of those of another race/ethnicity (table 5).

- Low scores on a five-item knowledge of government index are associated with low levels of political participation (table 6).

- Thirty-seven percent of American adults believe that politics and government are too complicated to understand, and 42 percent perceive that their own families have no say in what the government does (table 7).

- Eighty-three percent of U.S. adults agreed with a statement endorsing freedom of speech (table 7). Adults who have more education than a high school diploma were more likely than those having a high school diploma or less to agree that a speech against religion should be allowed. The percentages of adults endorsing a right to make such a speech ranged from 70 of those with less than a high school diploma to 93 percent of those with a bachelor's degree or higher.

- Most American adults believe that they possess some skills that are useful for participating in political life. Ninety-two percent said that they could write a letter to a government official that clearly states their opinion, and 85 percent reported that they could make a comment or statement at a public meeting (table 8).

Improving Public Education

Adults gave their opinions on four potential actions that might improve public education.

- When Americans were asked their opinions about possible actions that might improve public education, the two that received endorsement from the highest percentage were evaluating teachers according to high performance standards (69 percent) and not promoting students until they met strict academic standards (63 percent, table 9).

Contents

Introduction iii

Highlights iii

National Household Education Survey 1

Tables

Table 1. Percent of U.S. adults reporting reading activity, by selected characteristics: 1996 3

Table 2. Percent of U.S. adults reporting sources and frequency of receiving national news, by selected characteristics: 1996 4

Table 3. Percent of U.S. adults who correctly answered selected questions measuring knowledge about government, by selected characteristics: 1996 5

Table 4. Percent of U.S. adults reporting community participation, by selected characteristics: 1996 8

Table 5. Percent of U.S. adults reporting political participation, by selected characteristics: 1996 9

Table 6. Percent of U.S. adults reporting community and political participation, by indexes of reading activity, source of national news, knowledge of government, and community participation: 1996 10

Table 7. Percent of U.S. adults holding various opinions about statements related to political efficacy and democratic values, by selected characteristics: 1996 11

Table 8. Percent of U.S. adults holding various opinions about skills related to civic participation, by selected characteristics: 1996 12

Table 9. Percent of U.S. adults reporting that selected actions would improve public education a great deal, by selected characteristics: 1996 13

Technical Notes 14

The National Household Education Survey

The National Household Education Survey (NHES) is a data collection system of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), which has as its legislative mission the collection and publication of data on the condition of education in the Nation. The NHES is specifically designed to support this mission by providing information on educational issues that are best addressed by contacting households rather than schools or other educational institutions. The NHES provides descriptive data on the educational activities of the U.S. population and offers policymakers, researchers, and educators a variety of statistics on the condition of education in the United States.

The NHES is a telephone survey of the noninstitutionalized, civilian population of the United States. Households are selected for the survey using random-digit-dialing (RDD) methods, and data are collected using computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) procedures. From 45,000 to 64,000 households are screened for each administration, and individuals within households who meet predetermined criteria are sampled for more detailed or extended interviews. The data are weighted to permit estimates of the entire U.S. population. The NHES survey for a given year typically consists of a set of screening questions (Screener), collecting household composition and demographic data, and extended interviews on two substantive components addressing education-related topics. In order to assess data item reliability and inform future NHES surveys, each administration also includes data quality studies such as reinterviews with a subsample of respondents.

The primary purpose of the NHES is to conduct repeated measurements of the same phenomena at different points in time, although one-time surveys on topics of interest to the Department of Education are also conducted. Throughout its history, the NHES has repeatedly collected data in ways that permit estimates to be tracked across time. This includes repeating topical components on a rotating basis in order to provide comparative data across survey years. In addition, each administration of the NHES has benefited from experiences with previous cycles, resulting in improvements to the survey procedures and content. Thus, while the survey affords the opportunity for tracking phenomena across time, it is also dynamic in addressing new issues and including conceptual and methodological refinements.

A new design feature of the NHES program implemented in the NHES:96 is the collection of demographic and educational information on members of all screened households, rather than just those households potentially eligible for a topical component. In addition, this expanded screening feature includes a brief set of questions on an issue of interest to education program administrators or policymakers. In 1996, the topic was public library usage. The total Screener sample size is sufficient to produce state estimates of household characteristics for the NHES:96.

The NHES has been conducted in 1991, 1993, 1995, and 1996. Topics addressed by the NHES:91 were early childhood education and adult education. The NHES:93 collected information about school readiness and school safety and discipline. The 1991 components were repeated for the NHES:95, addressing early childhood program participation and adult education. Both components underwent substantial redesign to incorporate new issues and develop new measurement approaches.

The NHES:96

Parent and Family Involvement in Education and Civic Involvement were the two major topical components of the NHES:96. Each topic addresses aspects of the National Education Goals. The Parent and Family Involvement component was guided by Goal 1, concerning children's readiness for

school, and Goal 8, which encourages parental participation in education by recommending school promotion of partnerships with parents in the education of their children. The sample population for this component of the NHES:96 was children age 3 years through 12th grade. Their parents were interviewed about types and frequency of involvement with the school, student experiences that may be correlates of family involvement, school practices to involve and support families, and learning activities that take place in the home, including helping with homework. Older youth, that is, those in grades 6 through 12, also responded to some questions about family involvement in their education.

The Civic Involvement component was inspired by two other National Education Goals. Goal 3, dealing with student achievement and citizenship, states that students in America's schools will learn to "use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship...," and Goal 6 says that adults should possess "...the knowledge and skills necessary to...exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship." There were three populations of interest for the Civic Involvement component of the NHES:96: students in grades 6 through 12, parents of those students, and U.S. adults. Adults were defined as persons 18 years or older, not currently enrolled in grade 12 or below, and not on active duty in the armed forces. This random sample of adults, some of whom were parents, was included in the Civic Involvement component to provide information on civic involvement that would be representative of the entire noninstitutionalized, civilian population.

The data in this report are from the Adult Civic Involvement component of the NHES:96. In this component, there were questions measuring general reading activity, as well as items focused on obtaining information about the national news from the media. Other items measured participation in the community and participation in a range of political activities. The Civic Involvement component included measures of attitudes and skills related to civic life. There were also two versions of a five-item test of knowledge of government; each was administered to one of two randomly selected split half samples of adults. Items asked in the Adult Civic Involvement component were similar to civic involvement items asked of parents and students. See the Technical Notes, page 14, for more information on the Adult Civic Involvement component and the NHES:96. Researchers who are interested in obtaining the data may do so by contacting NCES. (Contact information is on page ii.)

Table 1.--Percent of U.S. adults reporting reading activity, by selected characteristics: 1996

Characteristic	Number (thousands)	Material and frequency						Percent who reported all three types[1]	
		Read a newspaper at least once a week		Read one or more magazines on a regular basis		Read any books in past 6 months			
		Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.
Total	188,233	85	1.0	86	0.9	66	1.3	54	1.3
Age									
18 - 24	21,345	81	3.4	91	2.1	72	3.7	56	4.0
25 - 39	64,157	83	1.7	88	1.7	68	2.3	55	2.3
40 - 54	50,442	87	1.7	85	1.7	65	2.5	55	2.6
55 - 69	31,396	90	1.9	82	2.3	66	2.8	56	3.0
70 and older	20,893	87	2.4	82	2.5	52	3.7	41	3.3
Sex									
Female	98,437	84	1.3	85	1.3	71	1.7	57	1.8
Male	89,795	87	1.6	87	1.5	59	1.9	51	2.0
Race/ethnicity									
White, non-Hispanic	143,297	88	1.0	87	1.0	68	1.5	56	1.6
Other race/ethnicity	44,936	78	2.3	82	2.0	58	2.5	47	2.4
Highest level of education									
Less than high school	23,823	71	3.6	66	3.7	42	3.5	30	3.9
High school diploma/equivalent or vocational education	73,185	85	1.6	86	1.6	57	2.1	45	2.1
Some college	47,621	89	1.6	89	1.5	74	2.3	61	2.6
Bachelor's degree or higher	43,604	91	1.3	94	1.1	83	1.7	74	1.9
Household income									
$15,000 or less	38,583	74	2.9	75	2.9	52	3.1	37	3.0
$15,001 - 30,000	47,833	83	1.9	81	2.3	62	2.8	47	2.8
$30,001 - 50,000	49,502	90	1.4	90	1.4	69	2.3	59	2.6
$50,001 or more	52,315	92	1.2	94	1.0	76	1.8	68	2.0
Parent with child age 18 or younger in household[2]									
Yes	71,646	85	1.6	86	1.6	66	2.1	55	2.2
No	116,587	86	1.2	86	1.1	65	1.7	53	1.5

[1] Read a newspaper at least once a week and read one or more magazines on a regular basis and read any books in the past 6 months.

[2] This question was asked of all respondents whose households contained members age 18 or younger and who were at least 12 years older than those children. "Parent" includes stepparent or guardian.

NOTE: s.e. is standard error. Numbers may not add to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey, 1996, Adult Civic Involvement component.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Table 2.--Percent of U.S. adults reporting sources and frequency of receiving national news, by selected characteristics: 1996

Characteristic	Number (thousands)	Source of daily national news				National news from newspaper/news magazine and from television/radio almost every day	
		Read national news in newspaper or news magazine almost every day		Watched national news on television or listened to national news on radio almost every day			
		Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.
Total	188,233	31	1.0	75	1.2	26	1.0
Age							
18 - 24	21,345	9	2.5	57	4.7	8	2.3
25 - 39	64,157	21	1.6	67	1.9	16	1.4
40 - 54	50,442	33	2.1	79	1.9	27	1.9
55 - 69	31,396	49	3.1	88	2.1	47	3.4
70 and older	20,893	50	3.4	91	2.3	46	3.5
Sex							
Female	98,437	26	1.6	74	1.5	23	1.5
Male	89,795	36	1.5	77	1.7	30	1.6
Race/ethnicity							
White, non-Hispanic	143,297	34	1.2	75	1.4	29	1.1
Other race/ethnicity	44,936	22	2.1	76	2.0	19	2.0
Highest level of education							
Less than high school	23,823	18	2.8	78	3.0	15	2.7
High school diploma/equivalent or vocational education	73,185	27	1.5	73	1.9	23	1.4
Some college	47,621	33	2.1	73	2.6	28	2.0
Bachelor's degree or higher	43,604	42	2.4	79	1.7	37	2.3
Household income							
$15,000 or less	38,583	21	2.5	76	2.6	17	2.4
$15,001 - 30,000	47,833	29	2.3	75	2.6	25	2.2
$30,001 - 50,000	49,502	32	2.1	73	1.9	27	1.9
$50,001 or more	52,315	39	2.3	77	1.8	34	2.1
Parent with child age 18 or younger in household*							
Yes	71,646	25	1.6	73	2.0	21	1.7
No	116,587	34	1.5	77	1.4	30	1.4

* This question was asked of all respondents whose households contained members age 18 or younger and who were at least 12 years older than those children. "Parent" includes stepparent or guardian.

NOTE: s.e. is standard error. Numbers may not add to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey, 1996, Adult Civic Involvement component.

Table 3.--Percent of U.S. adults who correctly answered selected questions[1] measuring knowledge about government, by selected characteristics: 1996

Characteristic	Number (thousands)	Knowledge items - Set A									
		What job or political office is now held by Al Gore?		Does President, Congress, or Supreme Court determine if a law is constitutional?		Which party has the most members in U.S. House of Representatives?		What majority is needed to override a presidential veto?		Which party is more conservative at the national level?	
		Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.
Total	188,233	70	1.5	56	1.5	64	1.7	33	1.3	51	1.7
Age											
18 - 24	21,345	59	5.0	46	6.3	53	5.2	37	5.6	49	5.6
25 - 39	64,157	68	2.5	54	3.3	58	3.0	26	2.4	51	2.9
40 - 54	50,442	75	3.0	66	3.2	71	3.4	41	3.1	58	3.4
55 - 69	31,396	72	3.7	50	3.9	71	3.8	36	4.1	50	4.2
70 and older	20,893	69	4.9	59	5.8	65	4.9	28	4.5	41	5.2
Sex											
Female	98,437	65	2.4	48	2.1	58	2.5	23	1.9	46	2.3
Male	89,795	75	2.4	64	2.4	71	2.4	44	2.6	57	2.8
Race/ethnicity											
White, non-Hispanic	143,297	77	1.6	61	1.7	67	2.0	38	1.7	56	1.9
Other race/ethnicity	44,936	48	3.2	41	3.3	54	3.8	17	2.0	37	3.7
Highest level of education											
Less than high school	23,823	28	5.2	25	5.2	41	5.6	6	2.7	15	4.3
High school diploma/equivalent or vocational education	73,185	62	2.6	46	2.8	52	2.8	23	2.4	38	2.9
Some college	47,621	84	2.4	66	3.5	77	3.0	39	3.3	65	3.1
Bachelor's degree or higher	43,604	90	1.8	78	2.7	83	2.6	59	3.3	79	3.1
Household income											
$15,000 or less	38,583	49	4.4	36	3.9	48	4.1	18	3.5	29	3.4
$15,001 - 30,000	47,833	57	3.6	48	3.9	64	3.8	24	3.1	42	4.1
$30,001 - 50,000	49,502	79	2.7	62	3.3	67	3.3	36	3.2	57	3.1
$50,001 or more	52,315	88	1.9	72	2.9	73	2.9	50	3.3	72	2.9
Parent with child age 18 or younger in household[4]											
Yes	71,646	67	2.6	57	2.7	64	2.8	28	2.7	53	3.0
No	116,587	72	1.9	55	2.0	64	2.3	36	2.0	51	2.3

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Table 3.--Percent of U.S. adults who correctly answered selected questions[1] measuring knowledge about government, by selected characteristics: 1996 --Continued

Characteristic	Number (thousands)	Knowledge items - Set B										Knowledge score of 3 or more[3] (Set A or Set B)	
		What job or political office is now held by Newt Gingrich?[2]		Does President, Congress, or Supreme Court nominate judges to the federal courts?		Which party has the most members in U.S. Senate?		What are the first 10 amendments to the U.S. Constitution called?		Which party is in favor of the larger defense budget?			
		Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.
Total	188,233	56	1.6	42	1.7	69	1.4	46	1.6	47	1.5	55	1.1
Age													
18 - 24	21,345	37	6.1	25	5.4	54	5.7	51	5.6	31	5.3	39	3.1
25 - 39	64,157	57	2.3	40	2.7	66	2.9	50	3.1	58	2.9	55	2.1
40 - 54	50,442	58	3.3	47	3.0	72	3.0	47	3.2	53	3.7	62	1.9
55 - 69	31,396	62	4.5	52	4.5	80	3.2	46	4.3	41	3.7	58	2.8
70 and older	20,893	55	5.7	37	4.3	67	4.7	24	4.2	27	4.0	49	3.6
Sex													
Female	98,437	49	2.1	35	1.9	63	2.1	42	2.0	40	2.4	46	1.6
Male	89,795	62	2.5	49	2.7	75	2.5	51	2.4	56	2.6	65	1.8
Race/ethnicity													
White, non-Hispanic	143,297	61	1.9	46	2.1	74	1.5	51	1.8	50	1.8	61	1.2
Other race/ethnicity	44,936	37	3.8	29	2.8	51	3.4	28	3.0	39	3.2	36	2.4
Highest level of education													
Less than high school	23,823	25	4.5	18	4.0	37	5.2	7	2.6	16	3.6	15	2.8
High school diploma/equivalent or vocational education	73,185	47	2.4	34	2.9	62	2.3	36	2.6	39	2.8	43	1.6
Some college	47,621	57	3.8	42	3.1	77	2.9	55	3.5	53	3.4	67	2.3
Bachelor's degree or higher	43,604	85	2.3	68	3.5	88	2.2	73	3.2	73	3.1	84	1.6
Household income													
$15,000 or less	38,583	37	4.3	25	3.4	55	4.2	25	3.3	28	3.8	32	2.9
$15,001 - 30,000	47,833	46	3.3	36	3.4	63	3.7	38	3.7	35	4.0	46	2.6
$30,001 - 50,000	49,502	62	3.1	45	3.1	74	2.9	53	3.0	56	3.2	62	2.0
$50,001 or more	52,315	73	3.0	57	2.8	79	2.6	62	3.3	64	3.3	73	2.0
Parent with child age 18 or younger in household[4]													
Yes	71,646	53	2.8	40	2.6	65	2.7	46	2.9	52	2.8	53	1.8
No	116,587	57	2.5	43	2.3	71	1.7	46	1.9	44	2.0	56	1.3

Table 3.--Percent of U.S. adults who correctly answered selected questions[1] measuring knowledge about government, by selected characteristics: 1996
--Continued

[1] Due to the requirements of another component of the NHES:96, two sets of questions were asked. One set was administered to each of two randomly selected split half samples. Subsamples were weighted to national population totals.
[2] "Speaker of the House of Representatives," "Congressman," or "Representative" were all correct answers to this question.
[3] Knowledge score was computed by adding the number of correct answers to the five questions (either Set A or Set B) the respondent was asked. The possible scores were 0 to 5.
[4] This question was asked of all respondents whose households contained members age 18 or younger and who were at least 12 years older than those children. "Parent" includes stepparent or guardian.

NOTE: s.e. is standard error. Numbers may not add to totals because of rounding.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey, 1996, Adult Civic Involvement component.

Table 4.--Percent of U.S. adults reporting community participation, by selected characteristics: 1996

Characteristic	Number (thousands)	Types of community participation						Participated in all three types[1]	
		Member of an organization		Attended religious services once a month or more		Did ongoing community service			
		Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.
Total	188,233	59	1.3	50	1.3	39	1.2	25	1.0
Age									
18 - 24	21,345	46	4.7	38	4.1	30	4.6	13	3.0
25 - 39	64,157	52	1.9	42	2.0	41	2.3	22	1.9
40 - 54	50,442	62	2.2	52	2.8	42	2.6	28	2.4
55 - 69	31,396	66	2.6	61	2.8	38	2.7	30	2.7
70 and older	20,893	72	3.8	64	3.5	33	3.4	26	3.3
Sex									
Female	98,437	59	1.8	55	1.6	42	1.7	28	1.4
Male	89,795	58	1.9	45	1.9	35	1.9	21	1.5
Race/ethnicity									
White, non-Hispanic	143,297	60	1.5	48	1.5	39	1.5	24	1.3
Other race/ethnicity	44,936	55	2.1	57	2.3	39	2.2	26	2.0
Highest level of education									
Less than high school	23,823	45	4.4	50	3.8	19	2.7	13	2.6
High school diploma/equivalent or vocational education	73,185	49	1.8	49	2.4	33	2.0	21	1.8
Some college	47,621	62	2.8	49	2.7	44	2.9	28	2.5
Bachelor's degree or higher	43,604	78	1.8	53	2.4	52	2.5	34	2.3
Household income									
$15,000 or less	38,583	47	2.9	51	3.3	29	2.7	17	2.1
$15,001 - 30,000	47,833	53	2.9	51	2.8	36	2.5	25	2.1
$30,001 - 50,000	49,502	60	2.3	47	2.4	39	2.1	24	1.9
$50,001 or more	52,315	71	2.0	51	2.2	48	2.5	31	2.1
Parent with child age 18 or younger in household[2]									
Yes	71,646	57	1.9	50	2.1	48	2.3	27	1.8
No	116,587	60	1.7	50	1.6	33	1.7	23	1.3

[1] Member of an organization and attended religious services once a month or more and did ongoing community service.

[2] This question was asked of all respondents whose households contained members age 18 or younger and who were at least 12 years older than those children. "Parent" includes stepparent or guardian.

NOTE: s.e. is standard error. Numbers may not add to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey, 1996, Adult Civic Involvement component.

Table 5.--Percent of U.S. adults reporting political participation, by selected characteristics: 1996

Characteristic	Number (thousands)	Type of political participation													
		During the past 12 months...										During the past 5 years...		Percent who voted and participated in one other type[1]	
		Contributed money to a candidate, political party, or political cause		Worked for a candidate, political party, or political cause		Wrote, telephoned, or signed petition about an issue		Attended a public meeting		Participated in a protest or boycott		Voted in a national or state election			
		Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.
Total	188,233	15	0.8	6	0.5	33	1.1	28	1.1	5	0.6	74	0.9	44	1.2
Age															
18 - 24	21,345	3	1.2	1	0.6	31	4.3	21	3.9	7	2.5	49	4.1	29	4.1
25 - 39	64,157	11	1.2	5	0.9	33	1.8	25	2.0	6	0.9	69	1.9	40	2.0
40 - 54	50,442	18	1.6	6	1.0	39	2.2	35	2.4	6	1.0	78	2.2	53	2.4
55 - 69	31,396	23	2.5	9	1.6	34	3.0	35	3.1	4	1.3	87	2.0	52	3.4
70 and older	20,893	20	2.3	5	1.6	22	2.8	21	3.0	1	0.6	88	2.3	39	3.3
Sex															
Female	98,437	13	1.0	6	0.7	33	1.6	25	1.6	6	0.9	74	1.5	41	1.8
Male	89,795	17	1.3	6	0.8	33	1.6	31	1.9	4	0.7	75	1.6	47	1.8
Race/ethnicity															
White, non-Hispanic	143,297	15	0.9	5	0.6	37	1.2	28	1.3	5	0.6	80	1.2	48	1.4
Other race/ethnicity	44,936	14	1.6	6	1.1	21	2.1	28	2.3	6	1.3	57	2.2	33	2.2
Highest level of education															
Less than high school	23,823	7	2.0	3	1.1	7	2.2	13	2.9	1	1.5	51	3.8	15	3.4
High school diploma/equivalent or vocational education	73,185	10	1.1	5	0.8	27	1.7	24	1.7	4	0.8	68	2.0	37	2.2
Some college	47,621	16	2.0	4	0.8	41	2.5	31	2.4	5	1.0	80	1.9	51	2.7
Bachelor's degree or higher	43,604	25	1.7	10	1.4	50	2.6	40	2.3	10	1.5	91	1.4	65	2.2
Household income:															
$15,000 or less	38,583	10	1.7	4	1.2	21	2.6	18	2.7	3	1.1	61	2.6	27	3.2
$15,001 - 30,000	47,833	9	1.3	4	1.1	27	2.7	24	2.2	5	1.0	71	2.4	37	2.6
$30,001 - 50,000	49,502	13	1.3	4	0.9	37	2.0	31	2.1	6	1.3	79	1.7	49	2.2
$50,001 or more	52,315	25	2.0	9	1.2	45	2.2	37	2.6	6	1.1	84	1.6	59	2.2
Parent with child age 18 or younger in household[2]															
Yes	71,646	14	1.3	5	0.9	36	1.8	31	1.8	6	0.9	71	1.8	47	2.2
No	116,587	15	1.1	6	0.6	31	1.4	27	1.4	5	0.8	76	1.1	43	1.6

[1] Includes persons who voted in the past 5 years and did at least one of the following activities during the past 12 months: contributed money to a candidate, political party, or political cause; worked (as a volunteer or for pay) for a candidate, political party, or political cause; wrote, telephoned, or signed petition about an issue; attended a public meeting; participated in a protest or boycott.

[2] This question was asked of all respondents whose households contained members age 18 or younger and who were at least 12 years older than those children. "Parent" includes stepparent or guardian.

NOTE: s.e. is standard error. Numbers may not add to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey, 1996, Adult Civic Involvement component.

Table 6.--Percent of U.S. adults reporting community and political participation, by indexes of reading activity, source of national news, knowledge of government, and community participation: 1996

Index	Number (thousands)	Level of community participation[1]								Level of political participation[2]					
		None		One type		Two types		Three types		None		One or two types		Three or more types	
		Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.
Total	188,233	27	1.3	23	1.1	25	1.0	25	1.0	19	1.0	50	1.5	31	1.1
Reading activity[3]															
None or one type	25,800	39	3.6	28	3.3	21	2.9	13	2.4	42	3.9	45	3.9	13	2.5
Two or three types	162,432	25	1.4	23	1.2	26	1.0	27	1.2	16	0.9	51	1.3	33	1.2
Frequent source of national news[4]															
Neither newspaper/news magazine nor television radio	38,298	35	3.5	24	2.4	22	2.6	19	1.9	37	2.7	48	2.8	16	1.7
Newspaper/magazine and/or television/radio	149,935	25	1.3	23	1.2	26	1.1	26	1.2	15	0.9	51	1.4	34	1.2
Score on knowledge index[5]															
0 to 2 correct answers	84,839	33	1.8	25	1.7	23	1.7	20	1.3	33	1.9	50	1.9	18	1.9
3 to 5 correct answers	103,394	22	1.6	22	1.5	27	1.4	29	1.4	8	0.9	51	1.5	41	1.5
Community participation															
None	50,761	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	32	2.3	52	2.4	16	1.6
One type	44,147	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	23	2.5	52	2.7	25	2.8
Two types	46,834	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	1.7	51	2.7	37	2.7
Three types	46,490	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	1.4	46	2.7	46	2.4

[1] Community participation is based on three measures: membership in any organization, having attended religious services once a month or more, and having participated in ongoing community service.

[2] Political participation is based on six measures: having voted in a national or state election within the past 5 years or, within the past 12 months, having done the following: contributed money to a candidate, political party, or political cause; worked (as a volunteer or for pay) for a candidate, political party, or political cause; wrote or telephoned an editor or public official or signed a petition about an issue; attended a public meeting such as a town meeting, a political rally, or a meeting of a neighborhood organization; or participated in a protest or boycott.

[3] Types of reading activity were read a newspaper at least once a week, read one or more magazines on a regular basis, or read any books in the past 6 months.

[4] Frequent source of national news was defined as reading about the national news in a newspaper or news magazine almost every day and/or watching the national news on television or listening to the national news on the radio almost every day.

[5] Score is the sum of correct answers to five questions; possible scores are 0 to 5. Two sets of questions were asked, one to each of two randomly selected split half samples. Subsamples were weighted to national population totals.

NOTE: s.e. is standard error. Numbers may not add to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey, 1996, Adult Civic Involvement component.

Table 7.--Percent of U.S. adults holding various opinions about statements related to political efficacy and democratic values, by selected characteristics: 1996

Characteristic	Number (thousands)	Adults who responded that . . .							
		Politics and government are too complicated to understand		Own family has no say in what federal government does		A person should be allowed to make a speech against religion		A book most people disapprove of should be kept out of a public library	
		Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.
Total	188,233	37	1.1	42	1.1	83	0.9	45	1.2
Age									
18 - 24	21,345	38	4.9	41	4.5	88	2.5	35	4.1
25 - 39	64,157	34	2.2	46	2.1	88	1.4	36	2.1
40 - 54	50,442	36	2.6	41	2.4	86	1.6	43	2.6
55 - 69	31,396	38	3.1	39	2.9	77	2.4	58	3.0
70 and older	20,893	51	3.0	42	3.4	64	3.7	68	3.5
Sex									
Female	98,437	43	1.6	45	1.5	81	1.4	47	1.8
Male	89,795	32	1.7	39	1.8	85	1.3	42	1.7
Race/ethnicity									
White, non-Hispanic	143,297	36	1.2	43	1.3	84	1.0	43	1.4
Other race/ethnicity	44,936	43	2.6	40	2.7	80	2.2	54	2.4
Highest level of education									
Less than high school	23,823	63	4.0	60	3.8	70	3.6	73	3.3
High school diploma/equivalent or vocational education	73,185	46	2.1	49	2.0	79	1.6	52	2.1
Some college	47,621	30	2.4	40	2.5	88	1.4	39	2.6
Bachelor's degree or higher	43,604	16	1.9	25	1.8	93	1.3	24	2.1
Household income									
$15,000 or less	38,583	53	3.1	50	2.5	73	2.5	60	3.0
$15,001 - 30,000	47,833	43	2.8	48	2.4	82	1.7	54	2.8
$30,001 - 50,000	49,502	34	1.9	41	2.2	83	1.6	40	2.5
$50,001 or more	52,315	23	1.8	34	2.1	92	1.3	31	2.3
Parent with child age 18 or younger in household*									
Yes	71,646	36	1.9	46	1.9	86	1.5	42	2.0
No	116,587	39	1.4	41	1.5	81	1.2	47	1.7

* This question was asked of all respondents whose households contained members age 18 or younger and who were at least 12 years older than those children. "Parent" includes stepparent or guardian.

NOTE: s.e. is standard error. Numbers may not add to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey, 1996, Adult Civic Involvement component.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Table 8.--Percent of U.S. adults holding various opinions about skills related to civic participation, by selected characteristics: 1996

Characteristic	Number (thousands)	Adults who responded that they . . .			
		Could write a letter to government official that clearly states his/her opinion		Could make a comment or statement at a public meeting	
		Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.
Total	188,233	92	0.7	85	0.9
Age					
18 - 24	21,345	95	1.9	86	3.5
25 - 39	64,157	94	1.1	89	1.4
40 - 54	50,442	94	1.3	85	1.8
55 - 69	31,396	92	1.5	84	2.2
70 and older	20,893	82	2.4	71	3.0
Sex					
Female	98,437	92	1.0	81	1.2
Male	89,795	93	1.0	89	1.5
Race/ethnicity					
White, non-Hispanic	143,297	93	0.8	84	1.0
Other race/ethnicity	44,936	92	1.5	86	1.8
Highest level of education					
Less than high school	23,823	77	2.9	69	3.5
High school diploma/equivalent or vocational education	73,185	91	1.3	83	1.6
Some college	47,621	97	0.8	87	1.6
Bachelor's degree or higher	43,604	99	0.3	94	1.1
Household income					
$15,000 or less	38,583	81	2.4	74	2.3
$15,001 - 30,000	47,833	92	1.4	81	2.0
$30,001 - 50,000	49,502	95	1.1	90	1.3
$50,001 or more	52,315	99	0.5	92	1.2
Parent with child age 18 or younger in household*					
Yes	71,646	94	1.2	89	1.4
No	116,587	92	0.9	82	1.2

* This question was asked of all respondents whose households contained members age 18 or younger and who were at least 12 years older than those children. "Parent" includes stepparent or guardian.

NOTE: s.e. is standard error. Numbers may not add to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey, 1996, Adult Civic Involvement component.

Table 9.--Percent of U.S. adults reporting that selected actions would improve public education a great deal, by selected characteristics: 1996

Characteristic	Number (thousands)	Actions to improve public education							
		Enforcing stricter discipline in school		Not promoting students until they meet strict academic standards		Evaluating teachers according to high performance standards		Making the school year longer	
		Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.
Total	188,233	53	1.2	63	1.3	69	1.2	19	1.0
Age									
18 - 24	21,345	39	4.8	61	4.5	69	3.5	8	2.1
25 - 39	64,157	46	2.0	60	2.2	66	2.4	18	1.7
40 - 54	50,442	56	2.4	64	1.9	70	2.4	22	2.1
55 - 69	31,396	63	3.1	67	2.7	69	2.9	21	2.7
70 and older	20,893	67	3.1	65	3.7	74	3.1	25	2.8
Sex									
Female	98,437	52	1.8	62	1.6	69	1.4	18	1.3
Male	89,795	54	1.8	63	1.8	68	2.0	21	1.7
Race/ethnicity									
White, non-Hispanic	143,297	53	1.3	64	1.5	69	1.3	16	1.1
Other race/ethnicity	44,936	53	2.7	60	2.5	68	2.4	30	2.1
Highest level of education									
Less than high school	23,823	53	3.9	62	3.7	65	4.4	29	3.3
High school diploma\equivalent or vocational education	73,185	54	1.8	66	2.3	69	1.8	17	1.9
Some college	47,621	53	2.5	67	2.3	75	2.2	20	1.8
Bachelor's degree or higher	43,604	51	2.6	53	3.0	64	2.7	17	1.9
Household income									
$15,000 or less	38,583	52	2.6	63	3.2	69	2.7	25	2.5
$15,001 - 30,000	47,833	51	2.7	65	2.7	65	2.7	18	2.1
$30,001 - 50,000	49,502	54	2.3	63	2.2	71	1.9	16	1.7
$50,001 or more	52,315	55	2.5	61	2.4	71	1.9	20	2.1
Parent with child age 18 or younger in household*									
Yes	71,646	51	2.1	62	2.1	67	1.9	18	1.4
No	116,587	54	1.6	63	1.6	70	1.3	20	1.5

* This question was asked of all respondents whose households contained members age 18 or younger and who were at least 12 years older than those children. "Parent" includes stepparent or guardian.

NOTE: s.e. is standard error. Numbers may not add to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey, 1996, Adult Civic Involvement component.

Technical Notes

Survey Methodology

The NHES:96 was conducted for the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, by Westat. Data collection took place from January through mid-April of 1996. The sample was selected using list-assisted, random-digit-dialing (RDD) methods and is nationally representative of all civilian, noninstitutionalized persons in the 50 states and the District of Columbia. As with the other NHES administrations, data were collected using computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) technology.

For the Civic Involvement component, questions were administered to 9,258 parents of 6th through 12th grade students, to 8,044 students in 6th through 12th grade, and to 2,250 adults 18 years of age or older who were not enrolled in 12th grade or below and were not on active duty in the armed forces. The adults composed a separate random sample. This report is based on the responses of those randomly selected adults.

Sample Selection

The sampling method used for the NHES:96 was a list-assisted, random-digit-dialing method.[1] The list-assisted method is a single-stage, unclustered method in which a simple random sample of telephone numbers is selected from all telephone numbers that are in 100-banks (the set of numbers with the same first 8 digits) in which there is at least one residential telephone number listed in the white page directory. Telephone numbers in this listed stratum include both listed and unlisted numbers. To support the research goals of the NHES:96, telephone numbers in smaller states and telephone numbers in areas with high percentages of blacks and Hispanics were stratified and sampled at higher rates.

Approximately 161,400 telephone numbers were sampled. After sampling, they were randomly divided into two groups. One group, consisting of 95 percent of the numbers, became the pool of numbers in which a screening interview would be administered and then a Parent and Youth interview, encompassing the Parent and Family Involvement in Education component and the Civic Involvement component, would be administered in eligible households. The other group of telephone numbers became the pool in which the same screening interview would be administered and the Adult Civic Involvement interview would be attempted in each household. Of the 55,838 completed screening interviews, 53,211 interviews (95.3 percent) were completed in households assigned to the parent and youth sample, and 2,627 interviews (4.7 percent) were completed in households assigned to the adult sample. One adult in each household in the adult sample was randomly sampled for the Civic Involvement interview with equal probability of selection.

Response Rates

The response rate for the screening interview was 70 percent. The Adult Civic Involvement interview completion rate, that is, the percentage of interviews conducted with the sampled adults, was 84 percent. Thus, the overall response rate for the interview was 59 percent (the product of the Screener response rate and the Adult Civic Involvement interview completion rate).

---

[1] Casady, R.J., and Lepkowski, J.M. 1993. "Stratified Telephone Survey Designs." *Survey Methodology*, 19(1), 103-113.

For the NHES:96, the item nonresponse rate (failure to complete some items in an otherwise completed interview) was very low. For some items in the interview, a response of "don't know" or refused was accepted as a legitimate response. Using an imputation method called a hot-deck procedure,[2] responses were imputed for missing values (i.e., "don't know" or "refused" for items not specifically designated to have those legitimate response categories or "not ascertained"). As a result, no missing values remain. The item nonresponse rates for variables in this report were generally less than 1 percent; nearly all had nonresponse of less than 3 percent.

Data Reliability

Estimates produced using data from the NHES:96 Adult Civic Involvement component are subject to two types of error, sampling and nonsampling errors. Sampling errors occur because the data are collected from a sample rather than a census of the population. Nonsampling error is the term used to describe variations in the estimates that may be caused by population coverage limitations and data collection, processing, and reporting procedures. The sources of nonsampling errors are typically problems like unit and item nonresponse, the differences in respondents' interpretations of the meaning of the questions, response differences related to the particular time the survey was conducted, and mistakes in data preparation.

In general, it is difficult to identify and estimate either the amount of nonsampling error or the bias caused by this error. In the NHES:96, efforts were made to prevent such errors from occurring and to compensate for them where possible. For instance, during the survey design phase, focus groups and cognitive laboratory interviews were conducted for the purpose of assessing respondent knowledge of the topics, comprehension of questions and terms, and the sensitivity of items. The design phase also entailed extensive CATI instrument testing and a multi-phase field test in which about 3,200 Screeners, over 950 parent interviews, about 300 youth interviews, and nearly 40 adult interviews were conducted.

The objective of the NHES:96 Adult Civic Involvement component is to make inferences about the entire civilian, noninstitutionalized population age 18 years or older and not enrolled in 12th grade or below. An important nonsampling error for a telephone survey is the failure to include persons who do not live in households with telephones.[3] The estimates were adjusted to totals of both telephone and nontelephone households derived from the Current Population Survey (CPS) to achieve this goal. The first step was the weighting associated with the sample of telephone numbers. A household weight was developed to account for the list-assisted sampling of telephone numbers, including the sampling rate differences for smaller states and by minority concentration strata. The weight was also adjusted for households that had more than one telephone number, hence more than one chance of being included in the sample. The household weight was the base weight for the subsequent weighting steps, which resulted in person-level weights, i.e., weights used to estimate the number of persons with different person-level characteristics. These steps included adjusting for nonresponse and raking to known population totals from the CPS.

---

[2] For additional information on the hot-deck procedure, see Kalton, G., and Kasprzyk, D. 1986. "The Treatment of Missing Survey Data." *Survey Methodology*, 12 (1):1-16.

[3] For additional information on telephone coverage issues and estimation procedures to correct for coverage biases, see J. M. Brick, *Undercoverage Bias in Estimates of Characteristics of Households in the 1996 National Household Education Survey*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, NCES working paper (forthcoming).

Due to the requirements of another component in the NHES:96, two versions of a five-item knowledge of government test were developed and administered to split half samples. The half samples were randomly determined by the telephone number of the household; therefore, they were not precisely equivalent to each other in terms of the demographic characteristics of adults. For the analysis presented in this report, the weights for the half samples were standardized to national population totals. In constructing the knowledge scale that is based on the sum of correct answers to the set of five questions administered to the respondent, the standardized weights were divided by two, so that the totals sum to the population totals. Specific standardization procedures are described in the NHES:96 *Data File User's Manual, Volume 1* (Collins et al. forthcoming).

Sampling Error

The sample of households with telephones selected for the NHES:96 Adult Civic Involvement component is just one of many possible samples that could have been selected. Therefore, estimates produced from the NHES:96 sample may differ from estimates that would have been produced from other samples. This type of variability is called sampling error because it arises from using a sample of households with telephones, rather than all households with telephones.

The standard error is a measure of the variability due to sampling when estimating a statistic; standard errors for estimates presented in this report were computed using a jackknife replication method. Standard errors can be used as a measure of the precision expected from a particular sample. The probability that a complete census count would differ from the sample estimate by less than 1 standard error is about 68 percent. The chance that the difference would be less than 1.65 standard errors is about 90 percent; and that the difference would be less than 1.96 standard errors, about 95 percent.

Standard errors for all of the estimates are presented in the tables. These standard errors can be used to produce confidence intervals. For example, an estimated 85 percent of adults reported that they read a newspaper at least once a week. This figure has an estimated standard error of 1.0. Therefore, the estimated 95 percent confidence interval for this statistic is approximately 83 to 87 percent.

The Rao-Scott adjusted Chi-square statistic was used as the significance test for table 6. For the other tables in this report, the statistic used was Student's *t*. As the number of comparisons at the same significance level increases, it becomes more likely that at least one of the estimated differences will be significant merely by chance, that is, it will be erroneously identified as different from zero. Even when there is no statistical difference between the means or percentages being compared, there is a 5 percent chance of getting a significant *t* value of 1.96 from sampling error alone. As the number of comparisons increases, the chance of making this type of error also increases.

A Bonferroni adjustment was used to correct significance tests for multiple comparisons. This method adjusts the significance level for the total number of comparisons made with a particular classification variable. All the differences cited in this report are significant at the 0.05 level of significance after a Bonferroni adjustment.

United States
Department of Education
Washington, DC 20208–5651

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use, $300

Postage and Fees Paid
U.S. Department of Education
Permit No. G–17

Standard Mail (A)

MS-5725 NCES 97-906 (57035)
Ted Brandhorst
Director
ERIC Facility
1100 West Street, Second Floor
Laurel MD 20707-3598

BEST COPY AVAILABLE